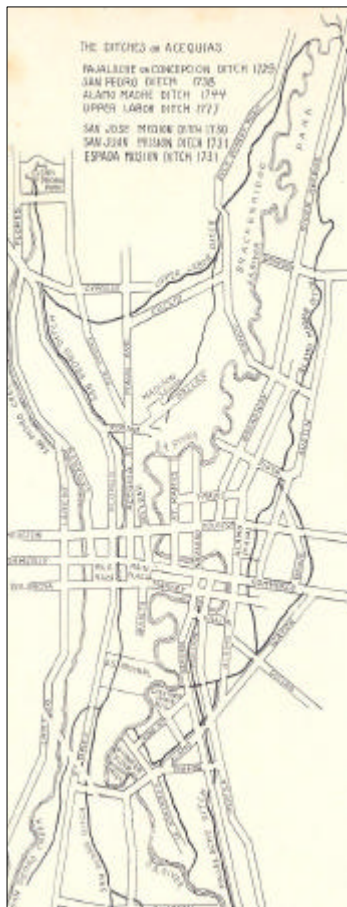


Neighborhood History – A Historical Sketch of Mahncke Park

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Spanish Acequias Map.
Source: 100th Anniversary
– Pioneer Flour Mills, 1851-
1951. San Antonio: Naylor.
San Antonio Public Library –
Texana Department.



Above: Post Card. *Camp
View of Fort Sam Houston*,
postmarked 1912. Source:
San Antonio Public Library –
Texana Department.

Historical Sketch

An early 20th century streetcar suburb, the Mahncke Park Neighborhood developed adjacent to the Broadway streetcar line and Brackenridge Park. The neighborhood's rich urban tapestry dates more than 280 years and was shaped by a historical backdrop of 18th century Spanish pasture lands, a 19th century U.S. military fort, a Catholic college, an expansive park, and public museums.

The Spanish-Mexican Era

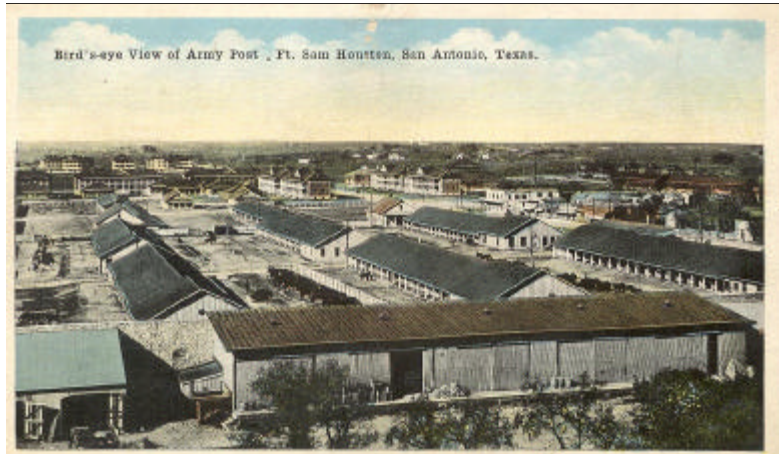
Mahncke Park Neighborhood is located within the original Spanish land grant, and remnants of the early Spanish settlement patterns are still apparent. Today's Burr Road on the northern edge of the neighborhood was the original northern boundary of the *ejidos*, or Spanish common pasture lands, that was part of the King of Spain's land grant establishing the city of San Antonio de Bexar in 1729. A major natural landmark of the neighborhood is the spring fed headwaters that become the San Antonio River. The Acequia Alamo Madre that served as a source of irrigation and drinking water during the time of the Spanish missions, was constructed in the 1720s east of the San Antonio River. The Acequia Alamo Madre was a soil-lined gravity flow channel that supplied water to the Mission San Antonio de Valero, known today as the "Alamo." Its course is still recognizable, beginning near the present day museum complex, and proceeding in a southerly direction along the east side of Broadway (formerly known as River Avenue).¹ In addition to providing water, the natural resources of the area yielded building material. In the 1800s, a rock quarry, located on the northwest side of today's Brackenridge Park, supplied limestone for making mortar.

Fort Sam Houston

In the period following the War with Mexico, a chain of military posts was established on the U.S. – Mexico frontier. In 1849, San Antonio was named headquarters of the United States Army Eighth Military District; and in 1870 the Texas Department of the U.S. Army had moved to San Antonio. However, it was not until 1876 when a permanent army post was established that construction began on 93 acres of city donated land known as Government Hill. A walled quadrangle measuring 624 feet by 499½ feet with an entry gate was completed, and building construction continued

¹ Maria Pfeiffer, "Brackenridge Park – An In-depth Historical Review," City of San Antonio web page, www.ci.sat.tx.us/sapar/bracklg.htm.

Right: Post Card. *Bird's Eye View of Army Post*. Source: San Antonio Library – Texana Department.



during the next twenty years. Among the buildings added to the Post were an officers' quarters, a commander's home later named the Pershing House, a hospital, and a chapel.²

In 1890, President Benjamin Harrison named the post for General Sam Houston. Prominent visitors were Chief Geronimo, held at the fort before his exile in 1886, and Theodore Roosevelt, who stopped with his men at the base before leaving for Cuba in 1898. In 1910, Lt. Benjamin Foulois brought the Army's first airplane to Fort Sam Houston, where he learned to fly with instruction through



Above: Post card. *Clock Tower in the Quadrangle, Fort Sam Houston*, San Antonio Souvenir Folder. Right: Post Card. *Firing Sunset Gun*. Source: San Antonio Library – Texana Department.



correspondence with the Wright brothers, and instigated the first experimental flights in United States military aviation. At this time the fort's military units included an infantry regiment, a cavalry regiment, two batteries of field artillery, and signal and engineer troops.³

² Art Leatherwood, "Fort Sam Houston," *The Handbook of Texas Online*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, February 15, 1999. www.tsha.utexas.edu.

³ *Ibid.*

Progressivism and Brackenridge Park

Right, below. Auto tours of Brackenridge Park. Source: Bruce Martin Collection
Bottom left: Brackenridge statue.



The dawn of the 20th century witnessed a progressive movement in San Antonio's urbanization. Public improvement bond issues for paved streets, bridges, and street realignments were approved by the citizens.⁴ In addition to transportation infrastructure, San Antonio's citizens initiated the development of its city parks, since public parks were being touted across the United States as an instrumental part of city planning and recognized for their therapeutic and social values. A 1902 San Antonio newspaper article noted, "No city in the South has so many beautiful public squares and parks as San Antonio. It has been a public fad for years to improve, beautify, and enlarge our parks."⁵



The fascinating history of Brackenridge Park begins in 1899 when George W. Brackenridge, San Antonio businessman and philanthropist, made a donation of 199 acres of land to the city for the creation of a park beginning at the San Antonio River headwaters and extending two miles downstream. Brackenridge moved to Texas with his parents in 1853 from Indiana, and with his family became a profiteer in the Matamoros cotton trade, forming the cotton firm of Brackenridge, Bates, and Company during the Civil War.⁶

After the war Brackenridge organized the San Antonio National Bank in 1866.⁷ Three years later, in 1869, Brackenridge purchased

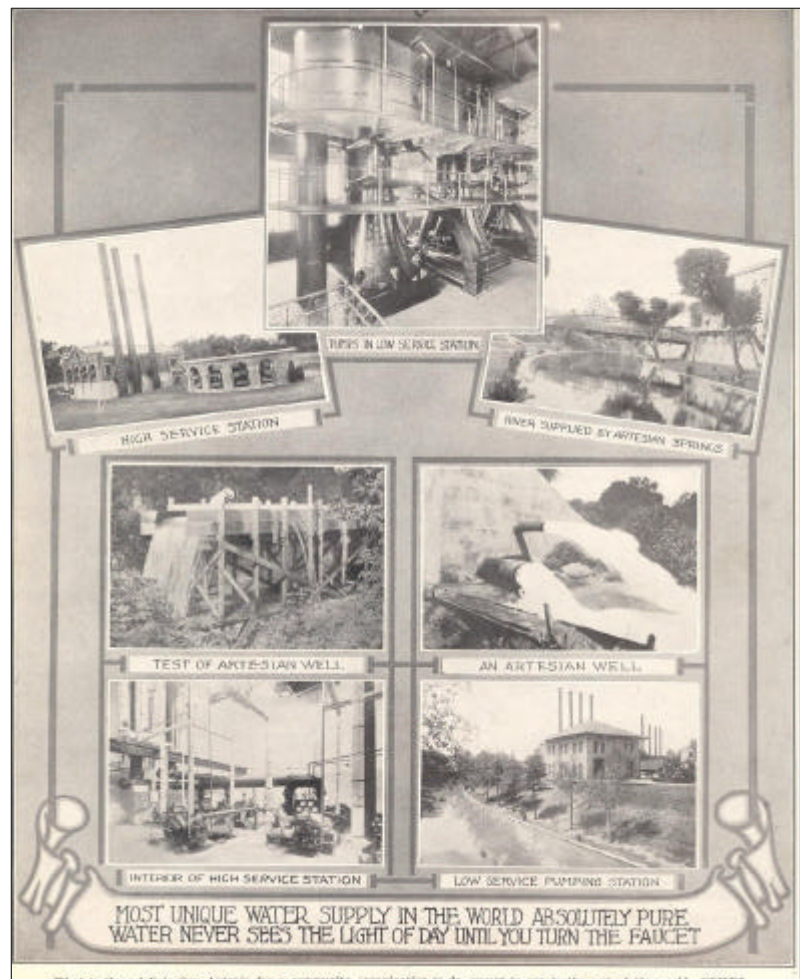
⁴ Maria Watson Pfeiffer. *San Antonio Time Line* (typed manuscript).

⁵ "Beautiful Brackenridge – A Pleasure Resort of magnificent Distances, Charming Driveways, Winding Stream and Lovely Floral Features – The Pride of Mr. Mahncke," *San Antonio Express*, September 28, 1902.

⁶ "George W. Brackenridge (1832-1920)," *The Handbook of Texas Online*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, last updated Feb. 15, 1999. www.tsha.utexas.edu.

108 acres at the San Antonio River headwaters, known as "Head of the River," from J.R. Sweet. He leased the property to J.B. La Coste who set up a private waterworks to supply running water to the city. However, Brackenridge eventually acquired the waterworks as a result of La Coste's financial difficulties and bought out the remaining interest in 1883. Serving as president of the San Antonio Water Works Company from 1883 to 1906, Brackenridge expanded the waterworks, installing pumps, pipes, a raceway and a reservoir at the top of the hill on the grounds of the present day Botanical Gardens. From the reservoir, water was carried in pipes to the city.

San Antonio Water Works. Source: *Greater San Antonio – The City of Destiny and of Your Destination*. San Antonio: Higher Publicity League of Texas, 4th ed., 1923. San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department



¹ Ibid.



Source: Bruce Martin Collection



The city undertook the care of the parkland, and Brackenridge enlisted the help of a friend, Ludwig Mahncke, who as the city's first park commissioner from 1896 to 1906, created a series of beautiful drives through the park and opened it up to the automobile tourist. The park was considered a "grand picnic place with fine shade trees" with "landscape gardening – lawns planted with flowering shrubs, bananas and other ornamental plants... and a deer preserve."⁹ The park first opened to the public in 1900¹⁰, and in 1912 the park was named in honor of Brackenridge.¹¹



⁸ Marilyn McAdams Sibley. *George N. Brackenridge – Maverick Philanthropist*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973, p. 141-163. Pfeiffer, *op.cit.* *A Master Plan of Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Texas*, September 1979. Prepared for the Department of Parks and Recreation by C.G.R., Inc., p. 20.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

A description in *San Antonio, Historical and Modern* (1909) provides an early glimpse of this natural wonder:

"The 'Head of the River', about four miles from the center of the city, has always been noted as a place of exquisite beauty, and has been the scene as well of historical and social events of more than usual interest..... The San Antonio river has its rise in numerous springs that gush from the sides of rocky ledges, or boil up here and there in the green valley shaded by gigantic, moss laden oaks and carpeted by the most gorgeous wild flowers in the spring time. The largest of these is known as the Worth Spring, because it was here that General Worth camped on his return from the Mexican War, and here he died with cholera in the year 1849, and was buried nearby. His remains have since been removed to the National Cemetery."¹²



Above: Head of the River
Middle Right: Municipal Golf House
Below: Bath House
Source: Bruce Martin Collection.



The park continued to grow through additional donations by Brackenridge, Emma Koehler, and Bexar County. By 1926, improvements included tennis courts, a polo ground and golf course, a swimming pool, a zoo, a Japanese Sunken Garden, and a "Mexican village."¹³ One of the oldest in the United States, the 18 hole golf course, constructed in 1915, was designed by noted course designer A. W. Tillinghast of Philadelphia complete with swimming hole "so that after the game the players may enjoy a plunge in the delightful waters of the San Antonio River."¹⁴

¹² *San Antonio, Historical and Modern*. Passing Show Publishing Co., 1909, p. 41. San Antonio Conservation Society archives.

¹³ Pearson Nemcomb, publisher. *The Alamo City*. San Antonio: Standard Printing Co. Press, 1926, p. 145. San Antonio Conservation Society Archives.

¹⁴ Pfeiffer, *op.cit.*



Above: Alligator Garden
Right: Artificial Lake at Brackenridge Park
Below: Rattlesnake Fry, Reptile Garden
Bottom left: Visitors at Witte Museum, 1945
Source: Bruce Martin Collection.



City Parks Commissioner Ray Lambert established the Brackenridge Park Zoological Garden on twelve acres of an old Confederate tannery site donated by Mrs. Koehler. In 1928, the San Antonio Zoological Society was established to purchase animals to be exhibited on a 50-acre tract which was the site of an old rock quarry adjoining Brackenridge and Koehler Parks. The zoo opened in 1929 with 344 specimens. Today the collection comprises more than 3,000 animals representing more than 700 species, including many endangered species. The Zoo features an innovative Children's Zoo and an Education Center for visitors of all ages.¹⁵

In 1923, the Lions Club of San Antonio, the largest Lions Club in the world, selected a site south of Mulberry for a supervised playground to be built by the club as a gift to the city. Opened on October 25, 1925, the playground was hailed as "one of the best in the United States." The facility is still in operation and is geared towards adults.¹⁶

The Witte Museum was built at the northeastern edge of Brackenridge Park in 1926, and the San Antonio Civic Opera Company constructed an open-air theater along the western edge of the Park in 1930. Although the bid to host the 1936 Texas Centennial celebration in San Antonio was lost, Pioneer Hall was constructed adjacent to the Witte Museum with Texas Centennial funds as a museum to commemorate Texas' early trail drivers.¹⁷

¹⁵ Mary Jo Bowers, "San Antonio Zoo," *The Handbook of Texas Online*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, last updated Feb. 15, 1999. www.tsha.utexas.edu.

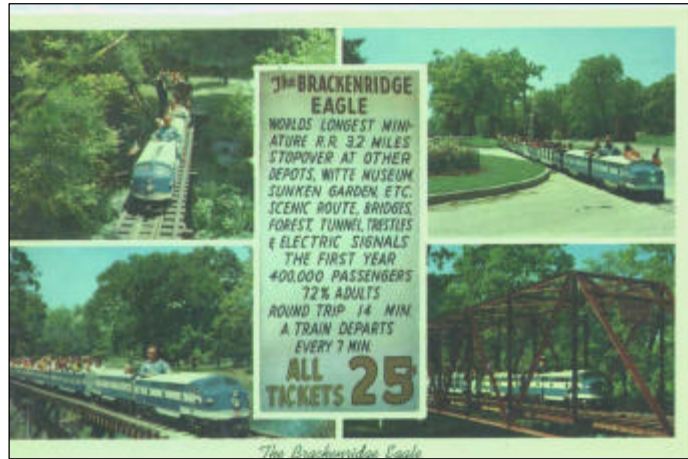
¹⁶ "Lion's Field," City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department. Web page. www.ci.sat.tx.us/sapar/lionsf.htm.

¹⁷ Pfeiffer, *ibid*.



Above: Witte Museum today.
Source: Witte Museum

Right: Brackenridge Eagle
Miniature Train, Brackenridge Park
Source: Bruce Martin Collection.



Incarnate Word College

Chartered in July 1881 as a Catholic college for women, Incarnate Word College is operated by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. The congregation purchased the 230-acre tract that included the Brackenridge Home from George W. Brackenridge in 1897. In 1945, the school had an enrollment of 560 and a faculty of 60. In the fall of 1971, the college became coeducational. In 1975, a nursing building, dormitory and dining hall were added. Today the campus comprises 56 acres. Most recently, the University of the Incarnate Word has expanded its facilities to include the Elizabeth Huth Maddux Theater Complex and a recreation and athletic complex. The St. Pius X Library holds 170,000 volumes and 700 periodical subscriptions.¹⁹ Enrollment in 2000 was 3,309 students.



"Brackenridge Villa - a boarding and day school for young ladies and girls," (postcard)

Source: San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department.

¹⁸ Pfeiffer, *ibid.*

¹⁹ Nancy Beck Young, "Incarnate Word College," *The Handbook of Texas Online*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, last updated Feb. 15, 1999. www.tsha.utexas.edu.



LUDWIG MAHNCKE.
Courtesy of Daily Express.

Ludwig Mahncke and the Establishment of Mahncke Park

Closely connected to the development of Brackenridge Park, Mahncke Park was named in memory of Ludwig Mahncke, the first Parks Commissioner of San Antonio. A native of Einhaus, Ratzeburg, Germany, Mahncke was born April 20, 1846. He immigrated to the United States in 1876, and his family later followed him to San Antonio. In 1882, Mahncke embarked in business in San Antonio when he managed the restaurant in Scholz's saloon on Alamo Plaza. He later would open the Mahncke Hotel at the corner of Houston and St. Mary's streets, which was considered "one of the best kept hotels in the city."²⁰ The hotel building was built in 1848, was leased by the Department of Texas, Federal Government, and later served as headquarters for the Confederacy, before it functioned as a hotel.²¹ The Mahncke Hotel was eventually closed on May 1, 1907, and the Gunter Hotel now operates at that site.²²

"He (Ludwig Mahncke) loved the trees, the beautiful shining river and the timid, dumb creatures of Brackenridge Park who were placed there by his hands, knew his voice and responded to his call.

"The winding river faced by living walls of green, the quiet shaded walks by the waters, where stately swans floated gracefully on the placid surface, the grand old pecan trees that lift their giant arms heavenward, the venerable oaks with their trailing mossy vestments, were all dear to the heart of Mahncke."

San Antonio Express,
January 18, 1909



Mahncke Hotel-Garden, San Antonio, Texas

In 1896, Mahncke was elected Alderman of the Fifth Ward. He later was appointed the first Parks Commissioner by Mayor Bryan Callaghan in 1896, and held that office until February 1, 1906.²³ As park commissioner, Mahncke was instrumental in developing Brackenridge Park and establishing wildlife preserves for deer, elk and buffalo. At his own expense he imported many plants and shrubs to landscape Brackenridge Park.

²⁰ *Souvenir of San Antonio, Texas*. 1902, p. 14. (pamphlet) San Antonio Conservation Society archives.

²¹ *San Antonio Daily Express*, Wed, May 1, 1907. Institute of Texan Cultures Library.

²² Maury Maverick, "City Must Save its Precious Park," *San Antonio Express News*, Sunday, July 23, 2000, p. 3G.

²³ "The Passing of Ludwig Mahncke this Morning – a Busy Career of Prominent Citizen Ends in Death," *San Antonio Daily Light*, Tuesday, March 27, 1906, p. 3

"Nature and Mr. Mahncke seemingly worked hand in hand. From the barren soil he produced a garden as welcome and refreshing as is the oasis of the desert to the weary traveler. Whatever might have been Mr. Mahncke's remuneration was in the pleasure of others found in these garden spots."

Daily San Antonio Express,
March 28, 1906

On March 27, 1906, Mahncke succumbed to pneumonia.²⁴ Described as one of the largest ever seen in San Antonio, Mahncke's funeral was attended by hundreds and the floral tributes had to be conveyed to the cemetery in two large wagons. Despite a heavy rain, a large funeral procession of 18 patrolmen, fire department members, city and county authorities, honorary and active pallbearers, the hearse, members of the societies to which Mahncke belonged, and many friends, made its way through the City down Avenue C, Houston Street, Alamo Plaza, and Commerce Street to the Elk's rest. Mahncke was eulogized as one of the City's greatest benefactors: "We mourn our loss, we mourn not Ludwig Mahncke. This big man's heart was the heart of a child, and his passion was his love for the beautiful. This lover for the beautiful has been the blessing of our city: to make San Antonio's parklands the gem of the South was Ludwig Mahncke's goal and is Ludwig Mahncke's creation."²⁵

As a tribute to his friend, Col. George W. Brackenridge donated to the city the land which connected Brackenridge Park to the former waterworks and its reservoir, and asked that this parcel be named to honor his friend, Ludwig Mahncke.²⁶ In memory of Mahncke's public service, the Mahncke Monument Association raised funds and erected a memorial monument to Ludwig Mahncke on January 17, 1909. The simple inscription on the monument reads, "Ludwig Mahncke – A Tribute of the People."²⁷

Today the monument to Ludwig Mahncke graces Mahncke Park, near the intersection of Broadway and Parland Place. The bronze bust sculpted by Pompeo Coppini rests on an eight-foot high granite pedestal by Frank Teich, a German sculptor and stonecutter.²⁸ The nearby fountain was donated to the City in Ludwig Mahncke's honor in 1964 by his daughter, Mrs. Joseph Mahncke Deutz.²⁹

²⁴ *Ibid.* "Citizens to Honor Mahncke's Memory," *Daily San Antonio Express*, March 28, 1906, p. 6. "Mahncke Funeral was Very Large," *Daily San Antonio Express*, March 29, 1906, p. 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Sibley, *op.cit.*

²⁷ "Will Unveil Mahncke Monument Today," *San Antonio Express*, January 17, 1909, p. 4.

²⁸ *San Antonio, Historical and Modern, op.cit.* "Four Thousand See Unveiling of Mahncke Monument," *San Antonio Daily Express*, January 18, 1909. Texana Department, San Antonio Library. "Frank Teich (1856-1939)," *The Handbook of Texas Online*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, last updated Feb. 15, 1999. www.tsha.utexas.edu.

²⁹ "Monument is a Tribute to Mahncke," *San Antonio Light*, November 29, 1981, *Sunday Woman Magazine*.

Mahncke Park – A Community Tradition



Schuetzenverein – San Antonio.
Source: Gift of the San Antonio
Conservation Society. The
Daughters of the Republic of Texas
Library at the Alamo.

Although little is recorded about Mahncke Park, community tradition holds that the San Antonio Schuetzen Verein, or shooting society, held its competitions in the park. An Old Word tradition brought by the German settlers, the San Antonio Schuetzen Verein was founded in 1857.³⁰ The Schuetzen Verein's first club was located on Austin Street. The second club was on Powderhouse Hill. However, the city cemeteries were eventually established there, and the shoots were often interrupted by funeral processions. As a result, the club moved to its final location on River Avenue (now Broadway) on nine acres of ground and held shoots at that location until 1919, when the club disbanded.³¹

Shooting competitions were held almost every Sunday afternoon, except during hunting season. Banners flew over the rifle range, as large crowds gathered to witness the shoot. Some of the club members not only made their own ammunition, but also made their own guns. The marksmen fired from today's Broadway Avenue in an easterly direction between Funston and Parland Places. Shooters got ten shots at the target, using two positions - standing or prone with a rifle rest. At the conclusion of the competition, wildflowers were picked from the fields, made into garlands, and draped around the necks of the champions. After the competition, the park was the site of songfests and dancing. Nic Lovece and his orchestra often played for the club's dances that followed.³²

One account recalls an unusual shooting match at Mahncke Park in 1898: "... Dr. Adolph Herff... and I. N. Rothwell, a photographer, were trying to break some shooting records and were doing just fine until two black-tailed deer walked in front of the firing line. Everybody got so excited that nobody got a shot at the animals, and they escaped into a nearby mesquite thicket."³³

The King Shoot was held on Pentecost Sunday – the seventh Sunday after Easter known as *Whitsuntide*. The man who scored the most perfect bulls-eye on *Whitsuntide* was pronounced the *Schuetzen Koenig*. One member of the San Antonio Schuetzen Verein, Emanuel Seffel, was declared the all-time Schuetzen Verein champion, honored for being the best marksman in Texas in statewide competition for three consecutive years.³⁴

³⁰ Louis B. Engelke, 'The Old Schuetzen Verein was a Way of Life for 60 Years,' *San Antonio Express-News*, Sunday magazine, October 12, 1975, pp. 8-9. San Antonio Conservation Society archives.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Another community tradition also holds that the old water reservoir east of the park was cleaned up by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s and became the favorite fishing hole of neighborhood youths.³⁵

In 1956, the San Antonio Garden Center proposed to construct an assembly hall, library, arboretum, botanical garden and test gardens in Mahncke Park, but the plan did not materialize since the city would not grant a lease for longer than 35 years. In 1958, the residents of Mahncke Park fended off a proposal by the City Water Board to locate its headquarters in Mahncke Park. Mrs. O'Neill Ford of the San Antonio Conservation Society spoke in opposition to the plan and in favor of preserving the park. Mayor Kuykendall commented that the park was used by a number of children as a playground.³⁶

In 1980, the San Antonio Botanical Gardens was established at the east end of Mahncke Park (east of N. New Braunfels). A non-profit organization, the San Antonio Botanical Society is dedicated to the public enjoyment and understanding of plants, their intrinsic value, their role in world ecology, and their importance to and use by humans. The Gardens, administered by the Parks and Recreation Department, features the Lucile Halsell Conservatory, the Auld House, a historic Texas hill country log building, the 1896 Daniel Sullivan House, children's and teens' gardens, a community garden, and annual special events for the community.

San Antonio
Botanical Gardens



³⁵ Bonnie Sue Jacobs, "Social Notes," *The North San Antonio Times*, Thursday, October 21, 1982. Vertical files, San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department.

³⁶ "Water Board Retreats in Mahncke Park Battle," *San Antonio Light*, Friday, January 10, 1958, p. 8.

Mahncke Park Neighborhood's Early 20th Century Urbanization

Broadway Avenue at Brackenridge park, circa 1930. Source: San Antonio Light Collection. The Institute of Texan Cultures, University of Texas at San Antonio.



Preserving the intrinsic beauty of the San Antonio River, both Brackenridge Park and Mahncke Park were magnets for residential and commercial development. The establishment of a streetcar line that extended along River Avenue (now Broadway) to Alamo Heights and completion of Olmos Dam in 1926 prompted the modern development of the Mahncke Park area as a suburban neighborhood.

The Alamo Heights street car line began operations in the 1880s. In 1890, a brief description of the line was provided by William Corner in *San Antonio de Bexar – a Guide and History*:

"This line, starting from the Alamo Plaza out Avenue E into Austin street, past the Southern Pacific R. R. Depot into River Avenue past the head of the river, encompassing that property to the Alamo Heights, (is) a new and important addition to the improved suburbs of the city. Color, yellow; night light, purple; fare, nickel."³⁷

Around the turn of the century the land around Allensworth and Carnahan had belonged to the Rev. Wallace Carnahan, who was a longtime headmaster at Saint Mary's Hall. One of the earliest residences was the Floyd McGown - J. Lewis Pipkin House, built in 1886 at 511 Brackenridge Avenue.³⁸ The earliest platted subdivisions included Oakland Terrace (1890), Park Grove (1907),

³⁷William Cornne, editor. *San Antonio de Bexar: A Guide and History*. Bainbridge and Corner, 1890, p. 7. (facsimile reproduction) San Antonio Conservation Society library.

³⁸Jacobs, *op.cit.*

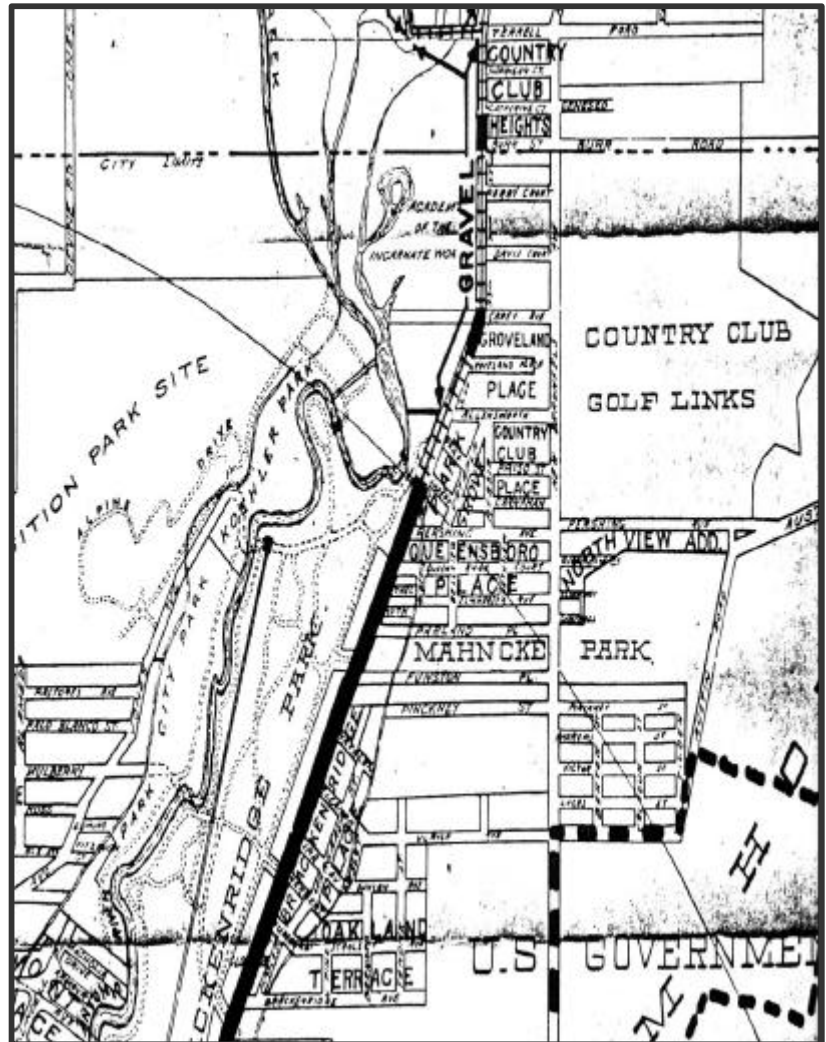
HISTORICAL SKETCH

Appendix A

Bracken Ridge Place (1909), Groveland Place (1912), Queensboro Place (1912), and Country Club Place (1923).³⁹

Right: 1924 City Map Showing the Earliest Platted Subdivisions. San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department.

Bottom: Playing Golf at the San Antonio Country Club. Source: Bruce Martin Collection.



The establishment of the San Antonio Golf and Country Club on N. New Braunfels contributed to the area's development. Organized in 1904, the San Antonio Golf and Country Club sought a site for a golf club, after three years of playing golf in a cow pasture. George W. Brackenridge granted the group a 20 year lease for 1235 ½ acres of land with an option to buy at the top of a hill just a short walk from the River Avenue streetcar. The club was chartered in 1907, and a clubhouse designed by Atlee B. Ayres in English half-timbered style was opened in 1908. In 1916, the clubhouse burned and a Spanish style clubhouse was completed in 1917. The building was later remodeled in 1958, in 1972-1973,

³⁹ The Map of the City of San Antonio. 1924.



Above: Post card of San Antonio Country Club, circa 1908. Source: San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department.

Right: San Antonio Country Club. Source: *Greater San Antonio – the City of Destiny and of Your Destination*. San Antonio: Higher Publicity League of Texas, 4th edition, 1923. San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department.



By 1912, the streets and blocks from Brackenridge north to Ulrich Avenues between Fort Sam Houston and River Avenue (Broadway), and from Ulrich (Eleanor Avenue) north to Pinkney St. between the Fort and New Braunfels Avenue were laid out. The northern most named street was Cow Avenue, now known as Hildebrand.⁴¹

Two water works pump stations were located in Brackenridge Park – No. 1 near Allensworth and No. 2 near Army Boulevard. Although streets were evident, little building construction had taken place, with exception of two institutions – The Salvation Army Rescue Home near the intersection Cow and River Avenue and Dr. Moody's Sanitarium at Stanley and Pine Streets.⁴² The 1917 City Directory shows that development was sparse. By this time only

⁴⁰ *The San Antonio Country Club – A Brief History*. Typed manuscript. San Antonio Conservation Society library.

⁴¹ *The Map of the City of San Antonio*. Compiled and drawn from the records by Hy Rullman, engineer and draftsman. Published by Nic Teng, 1912. San Antonio Library, Texana Department.

⁴² Fire Insurance Map of San Antonio. New York: Sanborn Insurance Co., 1912.



1925 Advertisement for H.C. Thorman's Model Homes.
San Antonio Express News.
 Source: San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department.

two residences were located on N. New Braunfels north of the San Antonio Country Club. There were three residences on Eleanor, and three on Reservoir (now Pershing Avenue). Twenty-four residences were located on River Avenue (now Broadway). The Salvation Army Rescue Home, the North Loop Saloon, and the Academy of Incarnate Word were in the 3000 block of River Avenue.⁴³

H.C. Thorman, a prominent San Antonio developer, contributed to the development of the Mahncke Park neighborhood with the construction of modern bungalow homes in the Country Club Estates in the mid to late 1920s.⁴⁴ Thorman was born in Toledo, Ohio, on November 26, 1884 to Mr. and Mrs. C. F. and Dora Thorman, German immigrants who had settled in Ohio. He married Lula Lumley, a native of Ohio, in Toledo on November 28, 1905. In 1907 he began his career as a San Antonio homebuilder, and built hundreds of homes in the City. He developed the San Antonio Country Club Addition, and the Olmos Park Estates, known as "the most beautiful of the exclusive residential sections of San Antonio." He practiced his trade as a contractor in Toledo, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Portland, Oregon, before locating to San Antonio. He served as President of the San Antonio Real Estate board in 1925, and was considered "one of the most progressive and enterprising businessmen of the city."⁴⁵

The term "bungalow" was used widely in the early 20th century in describing an affordable, comfortable, suburban American house. The actual Bungalow style of architecture developed from a blend of Oriental, Arts and Crafts and Prairie School architectural influences. This style was characterized by low pitched roofs and wide eaves; exposed rafter ends and knee-brace even brackets; usually asymmetrical faces with broad porches supported by massive, battered piers, sometimes of rustic materials; and expansive free-flowing living and dining rooms accessed by the front door.⁴⁶

⁴³ Jules A. Appler's *General Directory and Householder Directory of Greater San Antonio*, 1917.

⁴⁴ Bonnie Sue Jacobs, *op.cit.*

⁴⁵ Ellis A. Davis and Edwin H. Grobe. *New Encyclopedia of Texas*. Dallas: Texas Development Bureau, 1930, p. 421.. San Antonio Conservation Society archives.

⁴⁶ *Guidelines for Listing Your Property in the national Register of Historic Places*. Austin: national Register Department, Texas Historical Commission, 1995, p. 27.

Examples of the type of bungalows constructed by H.C. Thorman in other San Antonio residential developments.

Source: Greater San Antonio – the City of Destiny and of Your Destination. San Antonio: Higher Publicity League of Texas, 4th edition, 1923. San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department.



Thorman's bungalows featured "beautiful large rooms, hardwood floors throughout, tile bath with shower, large cedar closets, spacious includes service porch, concrete front porch, double garage, ribbon drive, shade tress and shrubs." The homes were sold "completely furnished, including Frigidaire, for \$1000 cash and balance monthly like rent till paid."⁴⁷ One advertisement by H.C. Thorman touted, "New bungalows you can afford - \$250 cash. The prices are \$3,750 and \$5,240. They have hardwood floors in living and dining rooms, built-ins and breakfast nooks in the kitchens. Electric lights, gas, water, and sewers."⁴⁸ Around this time, urban development was occurring to the north of the Mahncke Park Neighborhood. In 1919, a group of six families and three bachelors settled on a 24 acre tract that was formerly Terrell Farms, a water main and gas lines were laid from N. New Braunfels Avenue to the area and a deed was recorded in 1920. On March 31, 1939, the town of Terrell Hills was incorporated. The southern boundary

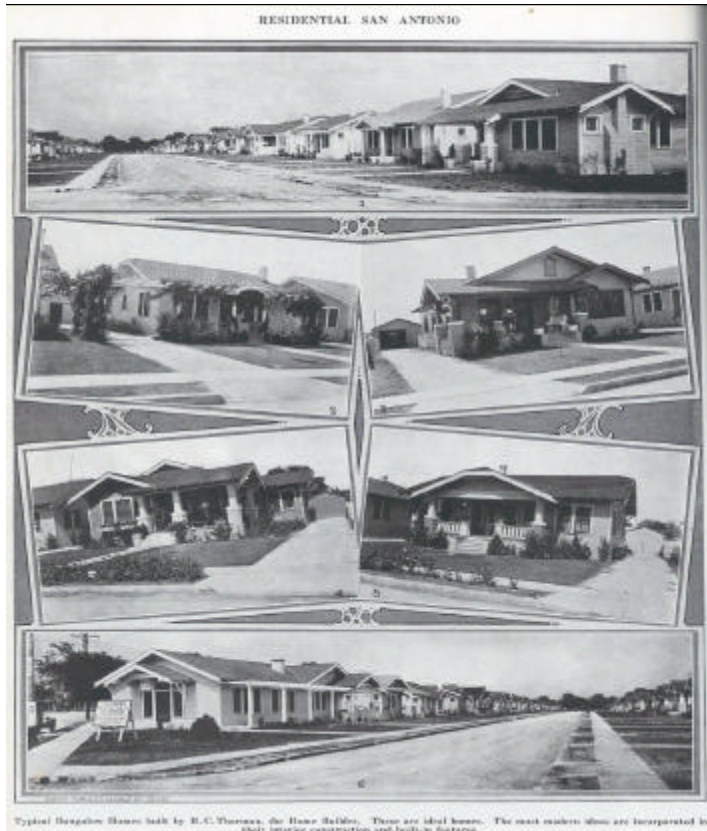
⁴⁷ H.C. Thorman Realtor advertisement "Completely Furnished - \$1,000 Cash," *San Antonio Express*, August 16, 1925, p. 6A.

⁴⁸ H.C. Thorman Realtor advertisement, "New Bungalows You Can Afford," *San Antonio Express*, August 23, 1925, p. 6A.

of Burr Road was finalized in April of 1945, and the town saw steady growth through the 1950 and 1960s.⁴⁹

Examples of the type of bungalows constructed by H.C. Thorman in other San Antonio residential developments.

Source: Greater San Antonio – the City of Destiny and of Your Destination. San Antonio: Higher Publicity League of Texas, 4th edition, 1923. San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department.



Another nearby community, Alamo Heights, was developed on the Charles Anderson ranch and a former federal government arsenal site. Although established in 1893, the Alamo Heights Land and Improvement Company actually began a program of expansion in 1909 that included a school building. The residents of Alamo Heights voted for an independent municipality and an independent school system in 1922.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Col. Cal Johnson, "The City of Terrell Hills," Terrell Hills Police Department web page.

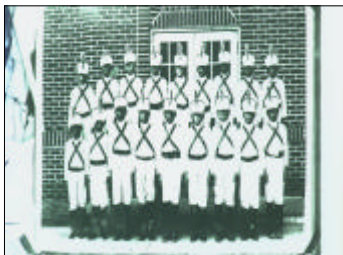
www.geocities.com/Heartland/Park/4013/thecity.htm.

⁵⁰ Minnie B. Cameron, "Alamo Heights, Texas," *The Handbook of Texas Online*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, last updated Feb. 15, 1999. www.tsha.utexas.edu.



"Each year we had a Mayfair and each class represented a different country.... The fund-raiser at Mahncke Park sported a Maypole, games, booths, a pie and cake sale, and a class king and queen."

Account of Lamar School Fair, circa 1930, *North San Antonio Times*, July 19, 1984.



Lamar School class photographs, circa 1933. Source: Lamar Elementary School.

As San Antonio's population boomed in the 1920s, a program to build modern schools was launched to accommodate the new urban growth. The River Avenue Improvement League addressed the School Board regarding the need for a new school. Three and a half acres were purchased at 201 Parland Place for the construction of a new school. Lamar Elementary was constructed in 1924, replacing the former school that opened in 1878. The school building contained eight classrooms, a small cafeteria, and a principal's office upstairs. During the 1920s and 1930s, Mahncke Park served as the site for special school events hosted by the Mother's Club. Mrs. Norman T. Kirk, along with other interested mothers, organized a Mother's Club in 1926, which later became the Lamar Parent-Teacher Association. PTA projects included supplying food to needy families, providing a playground, making improvements to the school grounds, and initiating tuberculosis testing. In 1930, two classrooms were added to the west end at a cost of \$18,081.27. Shortly thereafter, in 1936, a cafeteria and auditorium were added at a cost of \$12,769.80.⁵¹

During World War II, Lamar's enrollment was primarily children of families at Fort Sam Houston. In 1966, the building was remodeled to provide a clinic, a principal's office, a secretary's office and a book depository. The elementary school closed in 1975 because of declining enrollment. During the next decade, the building served as a special campus for handicapped students. At the urging of the area residents and the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association, the School Board voted to reopen Lamar as a mainstream elementary school, and it opened in the fall of 1985 with an initial enrollment of 285 students.⁵²

Lamar School Principals

1924-1925	Alice Breeding
1925-1933	Evelyn B. Sterling
1933-1941	Bess Nash
1941-1965	Helen Stark
1965-1973	Crystine Johns
1973-1984	Arnold Matthews
1984-1986	Corothy Burleson
1986-1995	Gail Fordyce
1995- present	Irma Porter Perfecto

⁵¹ Rene Lynn, "Lamar Principal Greets new Job with a Smile," *The North San Antonio Times*, September 10, 1984, p. 12. Rene Lynn, "Pair recalls Lamar School," *The North San Antonio Times*, July 19, 1984, p. 1. Vertical files, San Antonio Public Library, Texana Department. "History of Lamar School, 1936-1937" & "Our School's History (1924-2000)," typed manuscripts, Lamar Elementary School vertical files.

⁵² *Ibid.*



In addition to single family homes, multifamily dwellings were prevalent in the neighborhood. Apartment houses were constructed along Broadway and in the southern part of the neighborhood. The Brackenridge Apartments at 3308 Broadway, were situated at the corner of Funston Place opposite from Brackenridge Park. A 1925 newspaper advertisement noted that "the builders of the Brackenridge Apartments have set a precedent in Apartment House construction in San Antonio." The apartments had six large five-room apartments, each equipped with Frigidaire, with no charge for maintenance." Planned and built by C. R. Lowrie, the apartments were priced at \$100 per month unfurnished and \$150 a month furnished. Four kitchenettes were also available at \$75 a month. The complex featured elevator service, maid service, and a garage for every apartment.⁵³

Broadway began to develop as a commercial strip, during the 1930s and 1940s. One of San Antonio's legendary eateries, Earl Abel's, located at Broadway and Hildebrand in 1940. Earl Abel was one of America's greatest theater organists during the Vaudeville era. When 'talkies' put organists out of business, Abel entered the restaurant business in 1936 when he opened The Garden of Eatin' on 1910 N. Main Avenue. He later moved the restaurant to Romana Plaza, and then to its present location at 4200 Broadway.⁵⁴ On Broadway, the restaurant first opened as a drive-in and later as an indoor restaurant that operated 24 hours a day. The first all-booth restaurant in the South, Earl Abel's is still operated as a family establishment. The restaurant passed to Earl Abel Jr., who managed his family's landmark restaurant for 19 years until his death in 1999. The restaurant is presently owned by Jerry Abel, brother of Earl Abel Jr.⁵⁵



San Antonio Eateries on Broadway, mid 20th century. Source: Bruce Martin Collection.



⁵³ "Beautiful Brackenridge Apartments," *San Antonio Express*, August 16, 1925, p. 2A.

⁵⁴ Paul Thompson, "Earl Abel's Common Sense Was Sobering," *The Sunday Express-News*, April 2, 1989, p. 3-A.

⁵⁵ Cindy Tumiel, "Earl Abel Jr., ex-manager of family eatery, dies at 72," *San Antonio Express-News*, Monday, March 22, 1999. San Antonio Conservation Society vertical files.



Tourist Courts in Mahncke Park Neighborhood. Source: Bruce Martin Collection.

By the 1950s, the area surrounding Mahncke Park had been developed. Broadway Avenue was lined with gas stations, auto sales lots, restaurants, and neighborhood retail establishments. As Brackenridge Park had become a tourist destination, tourist courts were constructed nearby.



Several courts were situated on Broadway including the Parkview Motel (2900 Broadway), the Ranch Motel (3101 Broadway), the Aero Motel (3535 Broadway), Motel De Lux Tourist Court and the Park Motel Tourist Lodges (3617 Broadway). The Broadway Tourist Cabins, Carmen Court, and The Oak Lodges were located on Brackenridge Avenue between N. Pine and Broadway.



Children's recreational facilities included the Lion's Club Athletic Field and Play Ground, located at the southwest corner of Broadway and Mulberry, and Kiddie Park, a children's amusement park at the northwest corner.⁵⁶



An area attraction, Playland Park, established in the late 1940s near Alamo and Broadway, and was famous for its wooden roller coaster. Source: San Antonio Public Library Post Card Collection, Texana Department.



USAA's first headquarters building at the corner of Hildebrand and Broadway today serves as an office for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, a major San Antonio employer. Source: San Antonio Public Library Post Card Collection, Texana Department.

When Mr. P.W. Curry opened Kiddie Park in 1925, it was the nation's first amusement park established to cater exclusively to children. In its early days, goat, burro, and pony rides were available, but the land where those rides were was sold to make way for a gas station at the northwest corner of Broadway and Mulberry. Many of the original rides are still in operation, including the "Little Dipper" roller coaster, a carousel, a helicopter and flying saucer ride, hand-operated cars, a miniature school bus ride, a Ferris wheel, and a boat ride.⁵⁷ In 1978, Bob Aston bought Kiddie Park and he purchased a number of items from Playland Park when it closed in 1980. The steel Eifel Tower, clown tops for the trash cans, and the bunny and pony two seat carousel were all originally at Playland Park.⁵⁸ In 2001, Kiddie Park continues as a San Antonio institution while providing affordable entertainment at a beautifully shaded property between Brackenridge Park and Broadway.

A few blocks from Kiddie Park was another site San Antonio children enjoyed for years. Parland Place was the location for San Antonio's All-American Soap Box Derby Races, which were held in 1940 and 1941 and from 1947-1960. The races started at the top of Parland Place near North New Braunfels Avenue and finished 1,000 feet away near Lamar School. Parland Place was retopped prior to the races to ensure a smooth surface, and stripes were painted to define three lanes for the racers, which reached speeds of 24 miles per hour. In 1941, Mayor Quinn declared July 13 as Derby Day in San Antonio and designated Parland Place as Derby Downs.⁵⁹

Mahncke Park Neighborhood's Urban Renaissance

After a decline from 1950 through 1970, the Mahncke Park Neighborhood experienced a rebirth. "The abundance of livable bungalows and the vistas afforded by encircling golf courses and Brackenridge Park and the San Antonio Botanical Center, drew

⁵⁶ *Fire Insurance Map of San Antonio*. New York: Sanborn Insurance Co., 1924 (corrected 1943-1951). San Antonio Public Library, sheets 191-192.

⁵⁷ Leslie Hicks, "Kiddie-ing Around for 70 Fun Years," *San Antonio Express-News*, June 15, 1995, p. 1E.

⁵⁸ Susan Diehl, "Generations Enjoy Park," *North San Antonio Times*, December 10, 1981, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Information contributed by Bruce Martin, Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association.

architects, sculptors and other artisans to invest in property in the 1970s," according to a local newspaper account.⁶⁰

The Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association was founded in October 1979 to foster the protection, preservation and development of Mahncke Park and its surrounding neighborhood in all of its historical, physical, cultural and social aspects. The Neighborhood Association continues to provide a forum for residents to express themselves in areas of neighborhood and citywide concern.

A newsletter was initiated by the Neighborhood Association in 1980. More than 20 years later it continues to be published monthly by a volunteer staff and delivered by hand by volunteer Block Captains to over 700 households.⁶¹

Through the efforts of the Neighborhood Association, residents have worked together to plan for the future and bring improvements to the area. In 1983, the Mahncke Park/Narcissa Place Neighborhood Plan was the first neighborhood plan to be approved by the San Antonio City Council after a formalized neighborhood planning process. And in 1985, Lamar Elementary was re-opened as a mainstream school and children were no longer bused out of the neighborhood to attend elementary school. This was the first time in San Antonio Independent School District history that any school had been re-opened.⁶²

Since 1991, the San Antonio City Council has allocated Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for infrastructure improvements within the Mahncke Park Neighborhood. Approximately \$6 million has been used to construct new streets, curbs, and sidewalks and install underground drainage systems. Streets have been reconstructed on Westgate, Calhoun, Benton, Eleanor (east of North New Braunfels), Lucas, Victor, Andrews, Pinckney, and Claremont. New street construction is pending for Natalen, Margaret, Eleanor (west of North New Braunfels), and North New Braunfels (between Eleanor and Pershing Avenues).⁶³

Beginning in 1992, the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association, the Texas Forest Service, and the San Antonio Parks Dept. have worked to plant dozens of trees in area pocket parks, Mahncke Park, and other public property. In addition, a local organization dedicated to planting trees in urban areas, San Antonio Trees, planted over 100 trees along Broadway in the early 1990s.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ "Mahncke Park Relies on Neighborhood Work," *The North San Antonio Times*, Thursday, October 28, 1982, p. 15.

⁶¹ Information contributed by Bruce Martin, Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

In 1992, following the death of a longtime neighbor, area residents honored her by sowing wildflower seeds in Mahncke Park. Each year since then, neighbors have continued the tradition of wildflower seed planting as a means to beautify Mahncke Park and memorialize deceased neighbors.⁶⁵

Beginning in 1992, a group of neighbors came together in response to a threat from prostitution and drug dealing in the midst of the Mahncke Park Neighborhood. Prostitutes and drug dealers had taken up residence in an empty house on Ira Avenue, which had neither electricity nor water. Both illegal activities were being conducted at the house, in the surrounding neighborhood, and along Broadway from the Witte Museum south to an adult bookstore at the corner of Appler and Broadway, beyond the Mahncke Park Neighborhood boundaries. After several meetings with neighbors from the West Fort Alliance Neighborhood, three patrols of Mahncke Park neighbors were set up to patrol Broadway and the neighborhood streets at night on successive nights. The patrols observed customers picking up and dropping off prostitutes. Auto license numbers were recorded. A form letter was sent which alerted the occupant listed at the address registered for the license plate that someone driving the vehicle with the recorded license number had picked up or dropped off a known prostitute. The letter informed the occupant that the threat of disease was high.⁶⁶

The patrols continued for more than a year. The presence of neighbors walking with clipboards and flashlights was an extremely effective deterrent. After considerable publicity by the print, radio and television media, the police actively supported and helped with this grassroots effort. A number of sting operations by the police, coupled with a public awareness campaign, worked in discouraging customers. In addition, the patrol members lobbied the police department to station the mobile substation in the neighborhood. This, also, was an effective deterrent. The vice department of the San Antonio Police Department made regular patrols and arrests along Broadway. At one point, mounted patrols from the Sheriff's Dept. monitored the area as well.⁶⁷

The last arm of the effort was to send observers to court to observe the trials and sentencing of the prostitutes and customers apprehended. An education effort with the judges had limited success. The combined dedication and long-term efforts of neighbors and the San Antonio Police Department proved to be successful.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Information contributed by Marcia Dahlman, Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

In 1993, the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association successfully petitioned City Council to designate Broadway Avenue as an Urban Corridor - the second such designation in the city and the first inside Loop 410. The Broadway Urban Corridor extends from Burr Road south to the IH35 overpass and 200 feet on both sides of the street. Within Urban Corridors, no new billboards are allowed, garbage dumpsters must be screened from view, and there are limitations to on-premise sign size and height.⁶⁹

In 1994, San Antonio voters approved a "Quality of Life" bond issue, which included the following improvements in the Mahncke Park Neighborhood:

Queen Anne/Elmhurst Drainage Project	\$1,015,000
Brackenridge Park Rehabilitation	\$7,500,000
Witte Museum Science & Education Bldg.	\$1,000,000
Botanical Gardens Improvements	\$500,000
Lion's Field Adult Center Addition	\$100,000
Mahncke Park Improvements	\$100,000

San Antonio voters approved additional bond issues in 1999, which included \$110,000 for trails and improvements to Mahncke Park.⁷⁰

In May 1997, the San Antonio City Council voted unanimously to designate Pershing Avenue (between Broadway and North New Braunfels) as Utility Conversion District #1. The designation was the first in the City for a street in a residential neighborhood and included a commitment of \$515,786 to bury overhead utility lines, remove utility poles, and install new streetlights. Approval of the project was based on the concept of combining installation work of the San Antonio Water System's treated waste water pipeline with the burial of overhead utility lines. The project was completed in 2001.⁷¹

In 1998, a native grass restoration project was initiated to re-introduce natural prairie grasses within Mahncke Park. The restoration project was the first in San Antonio and Bexar County and was a collaborative effort involving the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept., the San Antonio Botanical Gardens, the San Antonio Parks Dept., and the Bexar County Master Naturalists. Among the native grasses propagated at the Botanical Gardens and planted in Mahncke Park were Little Blue Stem, Plains Love Grass, Canadian Wild Rye, and Side Oats Gamma. Subsequent plantings were conducted in 1999 and 2000.⁷²

⁶⁹ Martin, *op.cit.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

In Spring 1999, the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association received an award from the Bexar County Master Gardeners for the many examples of low water use landscapes in the area. In addition, four individual Xeriscape Awards were presented to owners of the following addresses in recognition of their excellent, water efficient landscapes: 2147 E. Hildebrand, 354 Thorman Place, 435 Elmhurst Avenue, and 311 Parland Place.⁷³

In 1998 and 1999, the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association (MPNA) organized National Night Out Against Crime events on the campus of Lamar Elementary School. The MPNA invited a variety of organizations to participate, including the Botanical Society, the Central Library, the San Antonio Conservation Society, the San Antonio Water System, the City of San Antonio Aviation Dept. and Office of Cultural Affairs. Representatives from City Council, the District Attorney's Office, Lamar Elementary School, the Fire Dept., and the Police Dept. also participated. In 1999, the San Antonio Police Dept. recognized the MPNA for having the best Night Out Against Crime event in City Council District 9.⁷⁴

In addition to winning recognition from the S.A. Police Dept. in 1999 for having the best National Night Out Event in City Council District 9, the Mahncke Park Neighborhood has received awards at the Annual City-Wide Neighborhood Conference. Awards were won for Neighborhood Beautification in 1997, 1998, and 1999, for Neighborhood Partnerships in 1998, and for Neighborhood Newsletter in 1996.⁷⁵

In 2000, construction work began to improve and expand facilities at Lamar Elementary School. Following approval of a bond issue in September 1997, the San Antonio Independent School District authorized spending over \$5 million on the project to include the addition of 17 classrooms, a physical education facility, a 2 story library/media center, a new air conditioning system for the entire school, and a new drive through "drop off" area on Bellview. Completion is anticipated in 2001.⁷⁶

The Mahncke Park neighborhood's rebirth was due in part to its variety of housing types (single family bungalows, duplexes, four-plexes, townhouses, condominiums, and apartment units – both large and small), its significant inventory of parks and greenspaces, and its central location with easy access to downtown, the airport, and major thoroughfares.⁷⁷

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Because of its many attractive features, commercial and residential developers have been drawn to the area. The Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association has been largely successful in working to encourage responsible development, which respects the scale and integrity of the neighborhood in both commercial and residential areas. Since 1979, a number of development projects have been proposed for the area – some more sensitive to neighborhood residents and businesses than others. Several of the most significant proposed developments included the following:⁷⁸

- In August 1982, the San Antonio Zoning Board of Adjustment voted to deny a variance to allow construction of a 16 story, 193' tall condominium at the southeast corner of Funston Place and North New Braunfels. This case was one of the first tests of the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association and was especially difficult due to the differences of opinion among neighborhood residents. Supporters of the project believed it would be a fine quality building which would improve the neighborhood – particularly nearby areas south of the proposed site. Opponents of the project agreed the proposed quality was impressive, but they believed the project's scale was inappropriate for a residential neighborhood of 1 and 2 story structures.

The Board of Adjustment postponed deciding the case at a hearing in June when over 50 people spoke in opposition to the project. Neighbors met with the developer during the summer months in an effort to reach a compromise. The developer offered to lower the building height to 169' and 14 stories, and the Neighborhood Association offered not to oppose the variances unrelated to height while considering a building height somewhat above the 45' permitted by law. No compromise was reached.

At the Board of Adjustment in August, several Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association members, neighbors, and the developer spoke in favor of granting the requested variance for height. Speaking in opposition were several Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association members, a representative of the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association and the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association Zoning Committee, representatives of the San Antonio Garden Center, representatives of the Botanical Center, and the Director of the Parks & Recreation Department. As part of its presentation, the Neighborhood

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Association displayed slides of helium-filled balloons raised to 193' at the site to clearly demonstrate the height of the proposed project. The San Antonio Coalition of Neighborhood Associations also opposed the project. Ultimately, the Board of Adjustment agreed with those who welcomed development, but opposed the plan because the building's proportions – mainly its height – would have a detrimental effect on the neighborhood. The case served to illustrate the importance of having a neighborhood plan, the importance of having persons with a sensitivity to neighborhood issues on City boards and commissions, and the importance of involving adjacent and nearby residents when changes to neighborhood land use are proposed.

- Seven properties west of North New Braunfels and between Parland Place and Elmhurst Avenue were acquired by an Alamo Heights businessman in 1985. A plan was proposed calling for a 10 story, 42 unit condominium, which required a zoning change from "B – Single Family & Duplex" to a more intensive designation of "R3 – Multi-Family." The plan was opposed by nearby residents and the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association based on the Neighborhood Plan goals "to maintain the existing residential character and densities of the neighborhood" and "to discourage the purchase and assembly of residential property for speculative purposes." In addition, the S.A. Botanical Society supported the Neighborhood Association's position, stating their endorsement that "Mahncke Park densities be maintained or reduced and that present zoning restrictions be maintained." The Neighborhood Association requested that the homes on the properties not be demolished pending resolution of an agreed upon plan of development; however, 90 days later, in March 1986, three homes were demolished and one home was moved, making all seven properties vacant.

Over the next 14 years, the properties remained vacant. Alternate proposals for development were proposed including a 2 ½ story multi-family residential project in 1989, a 2 story, 130 room motel with cocktail lounge in 1990, a 3 story apartment complex in 1991, a 2 story apartment development in 1992, and a plan in 1996 to move in four older homes and rehabilitate them for resale. In several cases, the proposals were announced, but no plans, drawings, or models were ever created. However, in all cases, the Neighborhood Association remained consistent in its goals of maintaining the residential character and density of the neighborhood.

Then, in 2000, Medallion Homes, a local home building company, purchased five of the seven properties and proposed to construct five single family residences without the need for zoning changes. Medallion Homes' plans were consistent with the goals of the Neighborhood Plan, and the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association supported the planned development.

Further, Medallion Homes met with nearby residents to address development and design concerns prior to beginning construction. Finally, in 2001, construction of all five homes was completed (with three homes being sold before construction was finished), while maintaining and enhancing the residential character, density, and integrity of the Mahncke Park Neighborhood and respecting the goals and guidelines of the Neighborhood Plan.

- Southwestern Bell Mobile Systems proposed construction of an accessory structure and a 150' high communications antenna at 3900 Broadway in 1992. The vacant land, located between Wendy's and IHOP and across the street from the Witte Museum, had previously been the site of Dave's Flower Shop. To construct the 150' antenna and accessory structure, Southwestern Bell requested a zoning change from "G, Local Retail" to "B-3NA, Non-Alcoholic Business District." The City's Planning Department recommended denial of the request and the Zoning Commission voted to deny the zoning request. The case was forwarded to City Council.

On December 10, 1992, Zoning Case #Z92172CC was considered by City Council. Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association representatives addressed City Council and asked that the zoning request be denied on the basis of inappropriate land use, inappropriate height, and the fact several multi-story buildings in the immediate area could accommodate the required transmission equipment. A petition in opposition to the zoning change was submitted with over 120 signatures from residents on Pershing Avenue, Carnahan Avenue, Thorman Place, and Allensworth Avenue. In addition, letters supporting the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association's position were presented from the Tobin Hill Neighborhood Association, the Oak Park Northwood Neighborhood Association, the Alta Vista Neighborhood Association, and the Vance Jackson Neighborhood Association. Representatives from IHOP's Corporate Office, the S.A. Conservation Society, and the S.A. Coalition of Neighborhood Associations also spoke in opposition to the requested zoning change. City Council voted to postpone the case, and it was later withdrawn by Southwestern Bell when antenna space was located and leased on an existing antenna at Fort Sam Houston.

Subsequently, the vacant property at 3900 Broadway was developed as a single story office building and retail space, consistent with the scale and mixed commercial use on Broadway.

This particular zoning case was significant in the way the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association successfully mobilized support from a variety of organizations throughout

the city. Two City Council members commented on the Neighborhood Association's strategy when they were quoted in a newspaper article shortly afterwards which focused on the increasing strength of neighborhood groups in San Antonio. The District 1 City Councilman spoke about having received letters objecting to the antenna from several District 1 neighborhood associations, "I thought that was pretty smart on their part." "Mahncke Park called in all their chips," said the District 9 City Councilman, "It's the first time I'd seen that collective support. It was very well strategized."⁷⁹

In 1991, the San Antonio Botanical Society purchased 13 two story duplexes in the 500 and 600 blocks of Funston Place, east of N. New Braunfels. The duplexes were donated to the City and then demolished. And in 1996, the Botanical Society bought nine additional duplexes in the same blocks of Funston Place, donated them to the City, and these structures were also demolished. With the exception of three remaining duplexes (636-638, 646-644, and 648-650), the entire block has been cleared of structures. The now vacant land is used to accommodate overflow parking from the Botanical Gardens parking lot, although discussions have indicated the land may be used in the future to facilitate expansion of the Botanical Gardens.⁸⁰

In 2000, the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Association was awarded a Neighborhood Challenge Grant of \$2,500 from the San Antonio Planning Department. The Neighborhood Association submitted a successful proposal in conjunction with a local Boy Scout working on an Eagle Scout project, which included landscape improvements to Mahncke Park. By combining the efforts of volunteers with the \$2,500 award, significant improvements were made to Mahncke Park.⁸¹

Recently, Merced Housing Texas, a locally-based, non-profit housing organization, rehabilitated the 23 unit Elmhurst Place Apartments at 130 Elmhurst Avenue. The three, 2 story buildings that make up the complex were adapted to provide low to moderate priced housing to deaf, blind, and orthopedically impaired residents. The City of San Antonio contributed \$285,909 toward the renovation of the 40 year old buildings with the balance of the \$751,000 project cost coming from private sources.⁸²

The history of San Antonio and the Mahncke Park Neighborhood is one of energetic people with great pride. Both the city and the neighborhood have been tested over the last 100 years, but remain

⁷⁹ Bruce Davidson, "Neighborhood Groups Gain Clout", *San Antonio Express-News*, January 24, 1993, p. 2B.

⁸⁰ Martin, *op.cit.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

strong as new generations continue to step forward and build a richer community through public and private partnerships and the thoughtful application of financial and human capital.⁸³

⁸³ *Ibid.*

